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ABSTRACT

This study proved an alternate secondary teacher education program at the University of Victoria to be a success. The most distinguishing characteristic of the program is that selected student teachers spend the entire school year situated in one of two secondary schools in the Saanich, British Columbia, school system. During this time students remain registered at the University of Victoria and receive a salary as well from the Saanich School District. During the course of the year, student teachers (working under the guidance and supervision of sponsor teachers and university supervisors) assume full responsibility for one class and serve as a teaching assistant in another class. Teaching schedules are rearranged at the end of the first semester. Student teachers are encouraged to become heavily involved in assisting with extracurricular activities and other school activities. A questionnaire mailed to all participating teachers and students in June 1978 is appended. (MM)

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THE SAANICH TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

A Management Analysis Paper Prepared for

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The Saanich Teacher Training Program

Program Development and Description

Recognition of the need for alternate secondary teacher education programs at the University of Victoria led to a series of discussions in the 1972-3 year between officials of School District No. 63 (Saanich) and members of the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria. These discussions focussed on the cooperative development and implementation of an internship program for selected final year secondary education student teachers to be operated in Saanich secondary schools.

The result of these discussions was the development of the Saanich Teacher Training Program which began operation in September, 1973, and which has continued to operate as an alternate secondary teacher education program in the Faculty of Education since that time. The most distinguishing characteristic of the Program is that selected student teachers spend the entire school year, September through June, situated in one of the two participating Saanich secondary schools. Both these schools are generally recognized to be superior in their administration and instructional programs. During the school year, while remaining registered students at the University of Victoria, student teachers are under contract with the Saanich School District, and are paid a salary by the District. Over the year, student teachers, working under the guidance and supervision of their sponsor teachers and university supervisors, take full responsibility for teaching one class in one of their two teaching areas, and assist another teacher in the teaching of another class in their second teaching area. At the end of the first semester of the school year in January, student teaching assignments are

changed so that student teachers gain direct teaching experience in their second teaching area while assisting with the teaching of another class in their first teaching area. Besides teaching, students become heavily involved in assisting with extra-curricular and other school activities, and in this way become active members of the school community.

Program Elements

A number of specific elements within the Saanich Program characterize it as typical of intership programs while at the same time illustrate how the Program responds to the particular local demands which have been identified by Saanich District officials and University of Victoria faculty.

Student teacher characteristics. Participating student teachers are in their final year in the Faculty of Education. They are selected from students who are on the five-year secondary Bachelor of Education program, as well as students who transfer to the Faculty of Education after having completed a bachelor's degree in Arts or Science. Since the Saanich Program started, student teachers' areas of specialization have included art, English, French, physical education, science, and social studies.

Selection. Admission to the Saanich Program is by application in the spring preceding the year of expected participation. This is followed by an interview conducted by the Program Coordinator, who is a member of the Faculty of Education, and principals and department heads of the participating schools. Final decisions regarding student admission are made jointly by the team of interviewers based on the team's adjudication of applicants' maturity and readiness to assume the additional responsibilities implicit in an internship experience.

Orientation. In the spring preceding their internship year, students who have been selected to participate in the Saanich Program take part in orientation sessions in the schools to which they have been assigned. Here they become acquainted with the school buildings, the schools' philosophies, the students, and their sponsor teachers. They also have the opportunity to observe classes and to work with their sponsor teachers in preparing to teach the following September.

Methods courses and supervision. Methods courses are offered through a variety of modes depending upon the preferences of individual instructors. These modes range from individually directed study linked specifically to the student teachers' particular teaching assignments, to more formal scheduled class meetings. Whichever mode is adopted, the content of the methods courses is constantly reinforced through supervision of student teaching by both methods instructors and sponsor teachers. Over the years, a strong sense of joint commitment to student teaching has developed between sponsor teachers and university supervisors with the result that a genuine team approach to the supervision and evaluation of student teachers has emerged. This relationship has been strengthened by the frequent involvement of outstanding teachers in methods course instruction, often by placing these teachers on part-time salary from the University and by paying for substitute time to release them for the supervision of student teachers.

Professional courses. Since the extended teaching responsibilities of student teachers prevent them from having the time required to take the usual number of university-based professional courses during the academic year, it is necessary for student teachers to take some of these courses in the summer session immediately preceding the autumn when they

begin their internship. These courses are in educational foundations and education psychology, and they provide an introduction to the theoretical issues which students see in practice as soon as they become involved in teaching in the autumn. This link between the theoretical and the practical is sustained through the Program as the remaining professional courses in educational administration and educational psychology required for graduation and certification are taught during the school year by university instructors who travel to the schools to meet with the students directly on the site of the students' practical experience. This constant interaction between theoretical and practical issues has been one of the continuing strengths of the Saanich Program.

Seminar. During the school year, the Program Coordinator holds a weekly seminar with the student teachers. The purposes of the seminar are to develop a sense of group identity, to distribute information, to exchange ideas, to share experiences and concerns. Visitors to the seminar have included Dean Norma I. Mickelson of the Faculty of Education, Saanich School District officials, and representatives from the British Columbia Teachers' Federation.

Program Evaluation

In an attempt to determine the reactions of sponsor teachers and student teachers to the Saanich Program, a questionnaire was mailed to all participating teachers and students in June, 1978, soliciting anonymous responses to the Program on the basis of the 1977-78 school year. These responses are summarized in the two tables which follow.

Table 1

Sponsor Teacher Evaluation: Percentage Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No basis for Response
1. I had adequate time and opportunity to meet with my student teacher to prepare him/her properly before the semester began.	25	50	5	20		
2. My student teacher willingly and conscientiously assumed the teaching duties assigned.	75	20	5			
3. My student teacher willingly assumed any school-related duties which were occasionally assigned (eg. taking homeroom).	65	30				5
4. My student teacher became involved in the school extra-curricular programme when opportunities were made available.	75	5	5	5		10
5. I had adequate opportunity to consult with University supervisors.	15	35	15	30	5	
6. My student teacher seemed adequately prepared academically to teach the courses assigned.	55	20	10	15		
7. My student teacher was able to identify with the school, its philosophy, and the regular staff members.	70	20	10			

Table 1 (cont'd)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Basis for Response
8. University course work being taken during the year did not seem to interfere unduly with my student teacher's school-related responsibilities.	20	25	15	25	10	
9. Generally speaking, the Saanich programme seems to be a better professional year experience than the professional year experience I had.	50	20		15		10
10. I would recommend the Saanich programme to a prospective student teacher.	55	40		5		

Note: Some totals do not add up to 100 percent since not all teachers responded to all questions.

Table 2

Student Teacher Evaluation: Percentage Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Basis for Response
1. The Spring school orientation helped me to prepare for teaching in September.		13	37	37		13
2. Generally speaking, the teaching and assist blocks which were assigned to me kept within the guidelines of the programme and I was not overworked.	13	87				
3. I received adequate help and observation from my sponsor teacher.	61	13	13	13		
4. I received adequate help and observation from my University supervisor.	13	50	13	13		
5. I had opportunity to become involved in the school extra-curricular programme.	37	50	13			
6. Professional year course work (eg. Ed. 337 and Ed. 430) complemented the field experience I received as a student teacher.	25	37	13	13		
7. There was a proper balance between professional year course work and teaching (ie. half a day for each).		37	25	37		
8. I felt prepared academically to teach the courses I was assigned.	25	50		13	13	

Table 2 (cont'd.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Basis for Response
9. Over the year, I felt that I became part of the school community, and that I was accepted by the staff.	63	37				
10. I would recommend the Saanich Project to someone I knew planning to enter the Professional Year.	63	37				

Note: Some totals do not add up to 100 percent since not all students responded to all questions.

Based on their responses to the questionnaire, it is clear that the general reaction of sponsor teachers to the Saanich Program is positive. This is especially evident in their responses to item 10 and in the written comments which several teachers returned with their questionnaire. However, concern with perceived inadequate communication with University supervisors is apparent in item 5. A second area of concern is sponsor teachers' perception that the University course work expected of student teachers resulted in an overburden when added to student teachers' school responsibilities.

Student teachers' responses to their questionnaire confirm the general endorsement of the Saanich Program apparent in the responses of sponsor teachers. This is particularly evident in students' responses to item 10. However, responses to item 1 indicate some concern with the effectiveness of the Spring orientation while responses to item 7 parallel sponsor teachers' observation that some overburdening of students' time may be taking place in the Program.

Change Analysis

Forces for Change

- A perceived need for improvement of preservice teacher education by both University and School District personnel.
- Cooperation between University and School District personnel in the planning and implementation of the Program.
- Growth in teachers' recognition of the service provided to the schools by student teachers over the school year.
- School District payment of a salary to student teachers.
- The exceptional quality of participating student teachers. Strong administrative support at the District and School levels.
- The perceived enthusiasm of involved University faculty.
- Growth of cooperation between sponsor teachers and University supervisors.

Forces Against Change

- Initial teacher suspicion of extended University faculty time in the schools.
- Initial resistance of teachers to extended periods of responsibility for student teacher supervision.
- The exceptional expense of providing an off-campus program for relatively few students.
- Financial hardship to students caused by loss of earnings due to the extended period of pre-service education.
- Additional travel time required of University faculty caused by off-campus site.
- Lack of sponsor teacher supervisory skills to assist and evaluate student teachers.

Program Future

The experiment in internship represented by the Saanich Program has undoubtedly been a success. The Program has brought together practicing teachers, University faculty, and student teachers in a highly interactive, real-world professional context which has encouraged the professional growth and development of all. However, it would appear that a number of concerns exist in the minds of sponsor and student teachers which must be addressed in the future if the Program is to grow and improve. Specifically, these concerns are:

- the improvement of the quality of communication among student teachers, sponsor teachers, and University supervisors.
- an examination of ways to improve the effectiveness of the Spring orientation.
- a re-assessment of the expectations and demands on student teachers' time deriving from their school responsibilities and their University course work.
- providing sponsor teachers with continued assistance in developing their student teacher supervisory skills.

Plans are currently being formulated to address each of these concerns. Specifically, an extensive inservice program is under way aimed at improving communication among sponsor teachers, student teachers, and University faculty. The particular thrust of this program is the improvement of communication through the clearer conceptualization of supervisory functions by both University faculty and sponsor teachers. Also, the Spring orientation is being extended, and steps are being taken to monitor more closely the demands placed on student teachers' time by the expectations of University course instructors and school personnel.